"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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Message of the East

VOLUME XLIII 1954 NUMBER 1

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AS A MAN THINKETH

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130 Beechwood St., Cohasset, Massachusetts

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLIII 1954 NUMBER 1

THE Easter feast teaches us a wonderful lesson. It is celebrated in almost every country. Others may not call it by the same name, but everywhere it is a feast signifying resurrection or the coming of new life. As nature bursts forth into blossom after the long dead winter, similarly man must rise with fresh vigor and strive to manifest new life. All such festivals are symbolic. If we do not understand their real significance and merely observe them by dressing the body in fresh garments and attending a religious service, we miss their purpose. It is true that this body is the temple of God, and because it is, we must cherish and care for it. But we should not forget the deeper meaning of these feast days.

What is the real lesson that Christ by his rising sought to teach? That man, the true man, is the son of God; hence he is immortal, indestructible, and he must prove it by transcending death. Our consciousness is now buried in our material interests; we must dig down beneath this physical life until we touch our spiritual nature and let that blossom forth. Such is the true lesson of Easter. It comes anew each year to remind us that we must gain a consciousness of that within us which survives all bodily dissolution. True resurrection means rising out of this grave of ignorance before we are separated from this body. When we have had even a glimpse of our True Self, then death can never again touch us. Let us find the Real! This is the mission of Christ and of all great Saviours or Seers—to show us the Real! —*Swami Paramananda*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Fill thy mind with Me, be thou My devotee, worship Me and bow down to Me; thus steadfastly uniting thy heart with Me alone and regarding Me as thy Supreme Goal, thou shalt come unto Me. —*Bhagavad Gita*

Such is the life of him who has learned how to pray, and to pray without ceasing—who has learned how to be still and know that God is God, and that all consciousness is one with the Supreme. Whosoever will, may come and partake of the water of Life, drink of the Infinite Wisdom, imbibe the power of the Heights, and be strong in His Might. —*H. B. Jeffery*

Contemplation is a state of feeling, a state of trust beyond words, beyond boundaries, beyond the just and the unjust; knowing the deep Omnipotence of God—knowing the Oneness of God—Rightness through Eternity,

Anonymous

God has many names and many forms. He is also formless. Worship Him. Lose yourself in His contemplation. It makes no difference by what name or in what form you worship Him. If you are sincere in your worship you will be blessed with His vision. Have faith and plunge into the fathomless ocean. Dive deep and you are sure to find the Eternal treasure. Try patiently to dive deep into meditation. In due course you are certain to receive His grace. —*Swami Brahmananda*

Draw within thy Self, O Soul! Seek thou the silent hour with truth. Know thou thy Self to be of the substance of Divinity! Verily within the heart doth God dwell! —*F. J. Alexander*

The aids to noble life are all within.

—*Matthew Arnold*

AS A MAN THINKETH

By Swami Paramananda

"As a man thinketh so is he." Whatever one thinks, that he becomes. Our success is according to what we think. Our characters are formed by that. The same is true of our destiny, so true that the tendency of our thought carries us on even after we drop this present life. Lord Sri Krishna teaches in the *Bhagavad Gita* how potent our thoughts are, especially when they are unbroken, as in meditation. In fact, when our thoughts flow in an unbroken current toward a spiritual ideal, that is meditation. Sri Krishna tells us that whatever one thinks of at the time of his death, whatever is uppermost in his mind, determines his after death condition. Naturally at the moment of departing from the body, the mind will follow its habitual course. Therefore at all times we must cultivate the habit of continued thought of our ideal, so that we are aware of it, not only at the time set apart for our spiritual contemplation, but throughout our waking hours. Such thoughts should be like a stream flowing through us always, and manifesting even through our actions.

Now it is not possible for us to dwell just on one thought all the time. The idea of meditation is not to concentrate upon one thing and take no interest in anything else. One big concept has many aspects. Take love, for instance. Love of God, love of Truth, is a very stupendous and all-embracing Ideal, but you manifest love first through human relationships, by loving your friends, your fellow beings, the people with whom you come in contact. Thus that central idea of love has countless expressions, although the paramount idea is to love God

above and beyond anything else. But how to love God? The answer is by learning how to love through loving all things, even those which do not wholly manifest the God ideal. God or Truth is the central Ideal, all-embracing, infinite, all-absorbing; therefore it must include all lives, all aspects. Nothing can be neglected or ignored. Life is constituted that way.

Religion is not merely to make one good through doing something for one's fellows, through bringing something helpful into the world. Religion also means meditation; and meditation, far from making us passive, gives us a wider consciousness, fuller strength, deeper wisdom.

True thinkers unconsciously catch the spirit of meditation. As their thought grows more profound, they lose contact with their external environment and we say that they are rapt in thought. Their thought may not be along the line of spiritual idealism, but it brings absolute attention and sometimes a sense of rapture or of dedication to some great end. What is the result? The thought unfolds itself. We find this not only among men of great spiritual genius, but among men of secular importance, scientists, artists, musicians. All minds that are idealistic receive their inspiration this way. There is no other way of gaining true knowledge either on the intellectual or on the spiritual plane. Utmost concentration we call it when it is applied to material accomplishment or mental ends. It is an act of dedicating oneself wholly and absolutely to an idea or an ideal—one that is capable of absorbing our interest.

Nature does not open up any mystery for us until we are able to perform this act of dedication. There are teachers who are so rigid that if they find that a pupil

is not attentive, they refuse to teach him. The same way with the great Mother-teacher. Unless we come to Her with a feeling of deep consecration, if we are filled with other interests, then, of course, She does not find us worthy to receive Her revelations.

We cannot gain something for nothing. We cannot gain anything that is real without supreme effort, and this effort we must make within ourselves, by our own self, with great unity of thought, free from all distractions; only then does it become natural for us to draw from the fountainhead, only then are we able to receive from the great Spiritual Revealer.

The formation of habit requires attention and repetition. We have formed certain physical habits and it is not difficult for us to follow them. But we have not formed habits of spiritual thinking, we have not formed habits of meditation; therefore it seems unnatural, difficult, and very often we are discouraged. We feel that we are dealing with something invisible and intricate. But let us persist until our new trend of thought becomes established. Constant thinking along the chosen line will enable us to do this, so that we can prove what the Lord Sri Krishna says in the Gita, that the mind though difficult to control as the wind can be conquered by constant practice and dispassion. In time the habit of good thoughts will prevail and ultimately all the thoughts of pain, of sorrow and disaster that formerly overwhelmed our minds will no longer be able to thwart us. We cannot, however, expect to gain such mental power suddenly. It comes as the result of constant practice. We should therefore take this practice as the basis for our spiritual growth.

Whatever we think upon, that we shall become. Since

this undoubtedly is true, why are we not more anxious to think on the higher, nobler, more spiritual aspects of life than we are to think upon those things that will drag us down and finally destroy us? Constant spiritual thinking is bound to mould our character in a divine pattern and make us worthy, strong and full of light.

When we introduce spiritual thoughts into our way of thinking, we do not wholly change our mode of living. We keep on living, we keep on doing; our hands, our mind, our senses all are active, but they are active for a different purpose. Instead of devoting our time to small, personal concerns, we begin to work for big, universal ends. The question is, how do we relate ourselves to these ends? How do we become consecrated to an ideal? The nearest point of approach is through our thought. That is why one cannot give to another any fixed subject of meditation. The same subject would not do for all alike. Each one must choose the ideal which he desires to contemplate. One may find it easy to meditate on the life of a holy saint, another on Jesus the Christ, or on the life of Lord Buddha, or on an absolutely impersonal ideal. There must be, however, something definite on which to focus. There is no indefinite way to meditate. We cannot meditate on an ideal which is not definite, nor can we be devoted to a vague concept. We have to take hold of our spiritual life and endeavor. We have to plunge into it, we have to seek it with wholeness of heart, we have to pray, we have to yearn for it, and this of course, means turning our whole being in a new direction.

From the moment that we really begin to yearn for God or Truth we find a new life starting within us. We must be careful that at this point we do not stop. Some people start with great fervor, but after the first little

hint of discouragement they abandon their effort. No one will ever achieve that way. Once you start you must keep on moving. Hundreds of times you may feel discouraged, you may have many moments when you will see nothing but dark clouds overhead. But you must bear on, always remembering that these are things to be overcome. They are the results of your past thoughts and actions.

For a long time we have accustomed ourselves to certain ignorant ways of living and thinking. These complicated, dark situations come as a result; we have made them; we can unmake them. And as we release ourselves from these bondages by holding in our mind thoughts that are more spiritual, noble and worshipful, we find that our mind becomes ever more independent and free. At first it does not like to be held in check; at first it does not find itself at home in thoughts of a spiritual nature, but very soon it not only feels at home with them, it wants to think of such things. It is hard to realize how completely the mind will change. A person who is used to reading only light novels cannot imagine finding interest in a book of religion or philosophy. He would probably say, "It would make my brain ache!" Yet that very same person by making a sincere effort, will in time find it impossible to return to the old manner of thinking.

It is extraordinary what the mind will do for us. We never begin to understand its scope, its immensity, until we put it to the test. Now, although we may know the secret, though we may have the idea that as we think so we become, and that our success will depend upon our way of thinking, merely grasping this idea will not help us. We have to carry it out, and we must begin in the right way. Sometimes we may seem to lose the way en-

tirely, but we must keep on seeking it and turn back again and again to our practice of higher mental discipline. This is what practice means. Eventually we shall succeed. Eventually we shall conquer the mind, so that no matter where it is engaged, always, like a needle in a compass, it will keep itself pointed to the ideal. This is what is meant by "living with God." It means a consciousness which is ours in life or death, in all our actions, in our hours of sleep and dreams, good happenings and bad happenings.

There are certain things we do automatically through our subconscious. If a mosquito stings us we automatically strike it. Similarly this mind will act unless it is taught otherwise. For instance now, where difficulty arises we at once feel despondent, overpowered by our situation, and instead of trying to transcend it, we accept misery because we do not know how to overcome it or where to find help. When, however, our mind has become established in the practice of meditation, it will react to all conditions in the same way, and thus will save us from constant turmoil and anxiety. Above all, it will give us tranquillity which is one of the most wonderful assets man can possess.

We all have our difficulties, but some people, even under great stress, maintain such calmness, such a peaceful attitude that we do not suspect that there is anything troubling them. They disturb neither themselves nor others. There are other people, however, of a different type who create imaginary conditions. They are nervous, excitable, unbalanced, full of restlessness, not knowing any peace themselves and certainly not creating any rest or peace for those around them. The choice lies with us as to whether we shall ally ourselves with the great posi-

tive forces of life which bring serenity and power or be bound to those negative thoughts and feelings which lead to everything that is weakening and destructive.

There is one thought I must leave with you in regard to one-pointedness which is one of the essentials for meditation. Genuine one-pointedness is possible only in regard to things spiritual. That which pertains to the outer world is unstable and therefore naturally carries the mind this way and that. It is only in the infinite, unchanging and real existence that we find the true basis for meditation. We should seek this within us through our higher reasoning faculty of discrimination. We must also seek it without us, but if we find it within we shall naturally find it without. Verily the whole world is full of God: such is the realization of the contemplative soul. When I find the light within myself, I find it everywhere. I find that the Hand which guides me in my sorrow and suffering also guides me in my joy and blessings. Never, never is it absent. This realization comes to one who is dedicated.

We have to consecrate ourselves. We do it first through our imagination. We bring our heart and our worshipful spirit, figuratively speaking, and offer them to the Ideal. This implies, at first, a distinct and separate consciousness (the self and God—the self and the Ideal), but when realization comes, we find all is one—the worship, the worshiper and the worshipped are all but different parts of the Infinite whole. Wisdom is born in our soul, and instead of the weakness we felt in the beginning, we are aware of strength; but we know that that strength comes from the Fountainhead alone, and that we can be sustained only through the mercy of That.

Thus, when the veil is torn and there is no more God

standing between us and Godhead, then we may truly say that there is nothing which can destroy us. We are in Him, we are part of Him. How then can there be any more death? How can there be any more fear for us?

The power of meditation is the most healing power in the world. This does not mean that we achieve success every time we sit down to meditate; but when in our attempt we succeed even for an instant, we find out suddenly how healing, how wonderfully illuminating the influence of meditation can be. If a sick person enters into that light, he no longer remains sick. If the blind enter into it, they cease to be blind. All our imperfections are removed when we come in contact with the Perfect One, and the way that we do that, the only way, is through this gift of our mind—meditation.

In the practice of meditation we must not attempt that which is unnatural to us or beyond us. There is always a way for each person, native to his own nature and inclination. We should take a little vow (to insure that we be steadfast) not to do things just when we please, not merely to think high thoughts only when our mind feels inclined, but rather to think them when we make up our mind to think them. We owe something to our soul. We must keep a fixed hour for our spiritual practice and hold faithfully to it. Also we should follow certain forms or prayers which are given to us, for these help to elevate the mind.

If we do these small, ordinary things with earnest spirit, gradually we shall find that our mind has become our friend. It will not rebel; rather it will help us. It will suggest more things for us to do and show us how we may more quickly and more readily reach Him. The mind has great strength, great power of penetration. It is only

because of its undisciplined nature that it drags us hither and thither. When it has once become our friend, it will show us many secret ways—short cuts—by which we may attain to God. Therefore we must develop the mental faculty. But we must not be too harsh when we find imperfections within us. We must have compassion at the same time that we have firmness of determination. What I mean by this is that we must not have such sternness that we are ready to denounce ourselves. No matter how many times we may prove weak or fail, denunciation will not help us. If we have a true sense of dedication we shall arise and go on. When the mind is unconnected with the Divine Spirit it is weak and unproductive of any good; but when it is dedicated it becomes holy and pure.

I give you these ideas so that you may form your own ideal and strengthen yourself through meditation upon it. The thoughts from the Bible, from the scriptures, from teachers, illumined sages and saints are like little seeds sown on the field of our heart. If the field is ready these seeds will bear fruit, if we water them and take good care of them. But if the soil is not fertile, if the owner of the soil is not careful and watchful and full of devotion the seeds will not grow, or will take a long time in growing. So much depends on our spirit of earnestness. We must seek to hasten our growth and strive for all that is in our power to attain. Nothing more is required of us.

The all-abiding One who knows everything that we do, every thought that passes through our mind, He reads our innermost life. If we realize this fact and seek to connect ourselves with Him, we shall find that we are gradually developing a wonderful comradeship with our

Ideal. Moreover, the awe that we naturally have in relation to the Divine will not make us fearful, but will draw us ever closer to Him in a love that knows no bounds or limits. In our thoughts and in our silence this consciousness will be with us once we have learned to control our mind and direct it towards its Source and Origin.

FROM THE "CHERUBIC PILGRIM"

By Angelus Silesius

(Translated by C. O. Hill)

Stop! Whither now so quick?
Your heaven is within you:
If it elsewhere you seek, it never
will be in you.

The rose, just as it here
the outward eye can see
In God's eye thus has bloomed
eternally.

It blooms because it blooms: without
"why" is the rose,
Without "wherefore" — cares not
whether another knows.

Unheralded, Love to her God passes
through the gate,
Wisdom and highest Wit long in
the courtyard wait.

With but one kiss the bride earns more
reward in God
Than all hired laborers, although
unto death they plod.

I must become a sun, and paint with
rays of fire
The uncolored ocean bright of the
Godhead entire.

The child on earth one year
already is as old
As was Methuselah, of such great
age as told.

Hence! Cherubim and Seraphim and all
the holy host!
Away, all saints and whatever else
heaven may boast!

I cast myself—the higher goal is mine—
Into the boundless sea of the
Uncreate Divine.

* * * *

Now, Reader, go! If further you
would read,
Yourself become the Scripture and
the Seed.

For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion; yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty; therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of His goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things; and remaining in herself, reneweth all things; and from generation to generation, passing into holy souls, she maketh men friends of God and prophets.

—*From The Apocrypha*

UNITY OF THE EAST AND WEST

By Dr. Dana McLean Greeley

(An address delivered on the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda in Boston on Jan. 31, 1954)

Religions are many, but religion is one. It seems to me that perhaps this is the keynote for our observance this afternoon. I am very happy indeed to be included in this Service and to be able to share with you something of the inspiration of the memory of a great leader who brought East and West together and who represents the kind of a religion that rises above all creedal restrictions and permeates the minds and the hearts of men everywhere.

I feel that there are several reasons for a natural interest on my part in the observance this afternoon of the anniversary, the ninety-first, I believe, of the birth of the Swami. In the first place, I do cherish a friendship for Sister Devi and I am very grateful to her for the share she accepted recently in a program in my own church, a program that has brought understanding of the fact that religion is one and that it is universal.

I am also happy to be here because of my acquaintance, brief as it was, with Swami Nikhilananda and my admiration and respect for him. And I think, if you will permit me to say so, there is a third reason for my taking satisfaction in this observance, and that is that over a long period of time, and particularly some decades ago, there was constant correspondence as well as exchange of ideas, and likewise of emissaries, between our church here and the Brahmo Samaj in India which I know is so intimately related to your own interests and sympathies.

I wonder if it is appropriate at this time to speak of at least three needs—needs that are evident and profound

in our current society or civilization. And when I say our current society, I am speaking primarily of what we call Western civilization. You as well as I are aware of the fact that the great religions of the world have all come from the East. The West has not yet produced a religious genius of the magnitude of the leaders of the great religions, the recognized religions of the world today. The faiths that have moved the minds and hearts and lightened the lives of peoples for the last several millenia are the faiths that have been indigenous to the Eastern mind. Perhaps, because of the depth or the mysticism of that mind, I find in our Western world today a need for a larger degree of mysticism, for a real experience of the nature and reality of religion, for a clearer understanding of the one Indivisible and Absolute in Whom you and I live and move and have our very being. For life without an experience of that One is superficial and unreal.

We in the Western world have learned to measure the distances of the stars and the length and the breadth of continents on this earth, but we have not learned to listen to the voice that speaks from within. We have not become acquainted with ourselves and with the vast powers of our own souls. More wonderful than universes and universes is the God that is within and our knowledge is woefully lacking with relation to the reality of Spirit. We might call it in our language a revival of the Spirit. You might call it here a tidal wave of spirituality that would inundate our lives and fill us with light and faith and with power, as a great tidal wave of the sea fills the bays and the harbors, and the rivers that normally enter into it. We need such a tidal wave of the Spirit. You know as well as I that it is said that when man begins to deteriorate or to become unmindful of the living God, when

civilization suffers a demise, then God inundates again our lives with His Spirit. I believe that the world is waiting for such a rebirth in this hour and that this rebirth is overdue.

Our need is not for materialism, for materialism is the death of our society, but for mysticism, a consciousness of the Infinite and of that which is infinitely precious and sacred. Even in the everyday realm and in common relationships and events, my friends, unless we have this deeper faith, we shall not survive the maladies or the frustrations of this hour.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a man of religious faith. One morning toward the end of his life, when he was so ill that his body was racked with pain and fever, he wrote in his study until his fingers were numb; he then dictated to his secretary until his voice was almost gone. When his wife entered the room she said to him, "I suppose you will say you are feeling fine this morning. How are you really?" He replied, "I *was* about to say that. I refuse to let the row of medicine bottles upon the shelf on the wall serve as the horizon of my life."

We need a wider horizon. We need a sense of the presence of God in our lives. We need a spiritual reference that will give us hope and courage in spite of the frailties or frustrations that hamper us as individuals or as a society. We need something of the mystical experience in every hour of our lives.

In the second place, my friends, it seems to me that we need again to be commanded and impelled by the ideal of service. We live so detached from one another, so careless of one another's interests, so oblivious to one another's needs, not only in our own neighborhoods, but likewise in the world around. We shall not know peace—

we shall not know life—until the ideal of service commands us again in such a way as to make us members one of another, that we may build each other up and invest our own lives in the lives of our fellow men.

You remember Lloyd Douglas's book *The Magnificent Obsession?* Lloyd Douglas conceived of (and personally happened to be) a physician who gave himself unstintingly in the service of those whom he loved. Even his right hand did not know what his left hand, in the words of Jesus, was doing. And he never asked any reward or return. The reward was in the privilege of being able to invest something of himself in those other people. That is what enriches life. That is what makes life worth living. That is what builds up the kind of humanity that you and I envisage for ourselves. We need to be commanded again by the ideal of service. I can say in parentheses that in America today charity or philanthropy or social work has reached a higher point in one sense, at least, than anywhere else in the world or in any other period of human history. But unless this charity and philanthropy and social work is really inspired by a religious concept, a devotion to the soul or the spirit of God that is in everyone of His children, it must in the last analysis be very thin and utterly meaningless, though bread be given to those who are hungry or warmth to those who are cold. It is manna from heaven, it is the warmth of love that people need more than anything else. So I say we need something of the nature of a mystical experience in our times and a heightened consciousness of Reality; and we need also a new sense of service, a new devotion to the ideal of brotherhood that will bind us together as one family.

In the third place, it seems to me that we need the uni-

versal emphasis in religion. The concept of religion is one, even though religions be many. There is no such thing as East or West. There is only one world and all of us are children of one God. We need a sense of universality permeating all our religious thought, all our religious life and the life of all the nations of mankind. So many of the religions of the world think they have a monopoly upon religious truth. You here today of the Vedanta are not among these. The way of life that you honor, the faith that you possess is not exclusive or in any sense dogmatic.

Dr. Peabody at Harvard University across the river, in his classes was discussing with the students universality of religion and the fact that people need to understand that there are many approaches to the summit of the mountain of God. He said that when he was a small boy, he heard that there was going to be an eclipse of the sun. So he put up signs in his neighborhood announcing the eclipse and stating that anybody who wanted to come into his backyard to see it, could do so for only ten cents. The neighbors came flocking. He said that there are churches which are like that. They think that heavenly phenomena or celestial truth can be viewed only in their own precincts or at their own altars, that somehow or other they have a monopoly over the consciousness or the vision of the Eternal. It is not so! It is not so! We need in this hour, perhaps as never before, a sense of the universality of religion; a faith that embraces all mankind; a love that knows no exclusiveness.

I think, my friends, that Swami Vivekananda taught and lived his life with the consciousness of at least these three great needs: the need for a mystical experience, the sense of the presence of the Divine; the need for service

as a vocation, a calling, a command; and the need for universality in religion. He spun to fame at the great Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and from that time to the end of his all too brief, but wonderfully rich and serviceable life, he gave himself to bringing people together and to proclaiming the oneness of God and of man.

The greatest disgrace of our world in the last many centuries of what we call our Christian era is not interracial conflict, bad as that has been. It is not the war that has been waged again and again and yet again between the nations of men: it is the tension, the egotism, the distress, the animosity, the misunderstanding, the open conflict that has existed among the religions of mankind. God is one. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye have love one for another."

That spirit of love is the spirit that you honor this day and more fundamental even than the United Nations was that ideal of the Parliament of Religions that so caught the great Swami's devotion and for which in spirit he gave his life. May we be similarly inspired and may we ourselves labor for such a unity. Thank you.

Your daily life is your temple and your religion.
Whenever you enter into it take with you your all.
Take the plough and the forge and the mallet and
the lute,
The things you have fashioned in necessity or for
delight.
For in revery you cannot rise above your achievements
nor fall lower than your failures.
And take with you all men.
For in adoration you cannot fly higher than their hopes
nor humble yourself lower than their despair.

—*Kahlil Gibran*

VIVEKANANDA'S TWO-FOLD MISSION

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

(An address delivered in Boston on Jan. 31, 1954)

"The day when Naren comes in contact with suffering and misery, the pride of his character will melt into infinite compassion. His strong faith in himself will be an instrument to reestablish in discouraged souls the confidence and faith they have lost, and the freedom of his conduct based on mighty self-mastery will shine brightly in the eyes of others as a manifestation of the true liberty of the ego."

These are the words of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda's teacher, which give us some understanding of the latter's character. They are also like a prophecy. Sri Ramakrishna had known his disciple before he had risen to fame, before he had been recognized by the world and had matured into a great personality.

Vivekananda came to Ramakrishna a youth, restless, somewhat haughty in appearance, confused at the time and filled with doubt regarding the existence of God. And this youth with fiery temperament, indomitable will, Sri Ramakrishna trained, tempered and prepared for the service of the world. The story of their meeting is not less fascinating than many of the dramatic episodes of Vivekananda's career. Most of us are deeply impressed to see Ramakrishna and Vivekananda together, because Vivekananda represents our doubts, our struggles and religious confusion and, most specifically, the conflict that occurs between a strong intellect and a deep heart, and Ramakrishna shows how we may reconcile them.

In spite of his inherent faith and the traditional influences of his religion, in spite of his being a son of

Mother India, who is by nature a mystic, it was difficult for Vivekananda—at that time called Narendranath—an unknown youth, a college student, to be convinced of the reality of God. Perhaps his doubts were instigated by reading the philosophies of his own land, but they were aggravated further when his sharp, penetrating and searching intellect investigated Western philosophies. At this crucial period of mental upheaval he came in contact with Ramakrishna. He was fully armed with discernment against religious hypocrisy, dishonesty and falsity. In fact, he was suspicious of Ramakrishna as a genuine religious, but Ramakrishna dissolved his doubts. How? Not by exposition of philosophy or book-learning, but by the proof of his own personal example and experience.

With what great earnestness Vivekananda put before his Master the question, "Sir, have you seen God?" Ramakrishna answered not in the negative, as certain leading philosophers, lecturers and religionists had done when Vivekananda had gone to them with the same question, but with the simplicity of a child.

"Yes. Yes, I have seen Him, and I can help you to do likewise."

Then Vivekananda's analytical, reasoning intellect yielded. Why? Because it was not what Ramakrishna said, but what he had been able to make his disciple see and feel.

Reverend Greeley, our guest speaker, referred to mysticism as the need of our Western society. It is true that India has been the home of mysticism. Her whole history is written with the ink of mysticism. Nowhere in the whole world have been born so many personalities stamped with that inherent gift and desire to know God empirically. If Vivekananda was impressed with Rama-

krishna's words, it was because the mystic in Ramakrishna not only knew of the existence of the Supreme, but had in all humility and faith made an alliance with Him. His mystical experiences were real and genuine, and this Vivekananda had the liberty of testing and verifying as he could not accept anything on hearsay or without proof.

The first chapter in Vivekananda's life is that of a disciple, being trained, prepared and drawn into the inner life, the mystic's home where he must first take his place and become well established before he can go forth into the world as a servant of man.

Then we find him at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893. So strangely dynamic is the whole episode that we cannot help but see in it the hand of Providence and recognize Vivekananda as a man of destiny. He was not sent to America to represent Indian religion at the Parliament. He did not belong to any organized religion nor was he given institutional support. He was an anonymous figure with some friends and admirers who had faith in him. They said, "Go. We will give you the money. You are a monk, penniless, but you are the right one to represent India in America."

Like the true mystic who lives by God's will, Vivekananda rejected not once, but twice the sum brought to him for the journey. He said, "Give this to the poor. I must first make sure that it is the will of God for me and if the Divine wishes that I should go, the money will come again." And so it did.

After he had wandered through the length and breadth of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, in order to find out the conditions of his people, after he had identified himself with the least, the lowest, the forgotten,

the afflicted of his Motherland, only then did he start out on his journey to America. In fact, this journey was impelled by the strong desire to help and serve those who could not help themselves, who had no education or opportunity, who struggled with poverty and lived in superstition and ignorance and whose fate was pitiable. Like Gautama Buddha of the sixth century before Christ, who had renounced his royal heritage under the urge of deep compassion, Vivekananda left the shores of India.

He said, "I will go to America, the land of advanced science, the field of habitual progress, the home of technological inventions—America, the wealthy and powerful. She will help me with her material assets to serve millions of people in India." Swami Vivekananda had come to the realization that he, too, had something to give and share. He could give India's best to America, he could bring to the West India's choicest gifts—her religion and philosophy. Under the inspiration of his Master they had become real and living.

It is interesting to read India's history when Vivekananda appears on her horizon. He is a figure of our spiritual renaissance period. India had been low. She was a subject nation under foreign control. The ills of her own society, her caste system, discrimination against the underprivileged, her colossal poverty,—all these had reduced her to a state of humiliation. The Western world looked upon her with condescending sympathy and arrogant superiority. India had lost her faith in herself, she had forgotten her past achievements in building mighty civilizations and their contribution to the world in fields of art, literature, science, religion and philosophy.

Vivekananda was conscious of this India and her need of regeneration. It was part of his mission to bring it about, to rouse his people, to instil into them the life that at the moment was slumbering. It became his task to restore his country's lost confidence. His own understanding of India's greatness and his faith in her powers were clear and decisive. Therefore, when he came to the United States of America, he knew that he could uncover India's treasures, long buried in the dust, and could share them with the West.

Among those who were present at the Parliament of Religions were various Christian organizations and delegates of the Buddhist and Mohammedan faiths. The Parsees had sent their representative and the Theosophists theirs. But Vivekananda did not come to represent a sect or denomination or group. He did not stand for a divided India, but for India as a whole, and his message was not the doctrine or the dogma or creed of any religious cult. He brought the truths of the Vedas, the philosophic literature on which the entire culture of India is founded.

Standing before this vast audience of the Parliament he proclaimed the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*—"In whatever way man seeks Me, in the same way I fulfill him. In every way men follow My path." Here was the keynote of universality. It was by this synthesis that India had lived through invasions and migrations and the rise and fall of civilizations for six to seven thousand years. India has been able to maintain her unity, not through rejection of differences, nor through intolerance toward differences, but by acceptance of the differences for their own specific values.

Vivekananda's message to the West was like the sound

of thunder and the flash of lightning. It frightened some. There are millions of religious people in the world who cannot face truth without feeling a little sense of fear. Vivekananda was bold, his whole personality fearless. "If I antagonize people by my utterances," he said to himself, "Still I must give them the truth." But he did win many friends. He thundered that concept of Hinduism into the ears of his spellbound audience. "It is sin to call man a sinner. Know the glorious nature of the Soul. Know that each Soul is potentially divine, that each being is a potential divinity."

Think of the magnitude of such teaching! He had the personality, he had the power to enthral the listeners by his message. Did he go to school of elocution to learn oratory? Was he trained to be the founder of an organization? No, Vivekananda was a pioneer, a divinely inspired worker. He acted as he was led from within. In Vivekananda two strong characteristics struggled, one with the other—the dreamer and the doer. Meditation was as natural for him as breathing; in him the desire to lose himself in the consciousness of the Infinite was so strong that he had coaxed his Master to help him break the boundary of consciousness and reach the Unbounded, the Cosmic, but his Master held him back.

Sri Ramakrishna had appealed to his disciple's compassion, saying, "Do you want to be selfish and not serve man? Do you want to lose yourself in the Infinite? It is not for this you were born. Go and find your God in man. Serve Him there."

To keep Sri Ramakrishna's command, to fulfill his own destiny, Vivekananda gave himself to the service of man. We hear him say, "May I be born and reborn again and again and suffer a thousand miseries if only

I'm able to worship the only God in Whom I believe, the sum total of all souls, and above all my God the wicked, my God the afflicted, my God the poor of all races. After much *tapasya* (spiritual practice) I have known that the highest truth is this: God is present in every being. These are all the manifold forms of Him. There is no other God I seek, for he alone is worshipping God who serves all beings."

Few in the West realize that Vivekananda was Mahatma Gandhi's predecessor. Vivekananda prepared the soil, planted the seeds and Gandhi cultivated the plants and watched over them. Vivekananda aroused in Indian masses their faith in the soul force. Gandhiji put that force into action. This is part of India's history, the land that has continued to produce prophets, seers and mystics. In India spiritual leadership is of utmost importance. A man who has realized the truth and lives by it—he alone has the right to lead. That's why Indian masses followed Gandhi like dogs. His word became a command, a law, not because he was a politician or a statesman, but because he never went against his own word. What he said, he did. If we do not understand this about India, we cannot understand her at all.

Vivekananda's following in the East and the West, his success as a teacher, reformer, patriot, awakener of souls and inspirer, was due to his tremendous personality. Superceding his multiple gifts was his character, his instrumentality which he kept subordinate to the Supreme. He had reached what Ramakrishna proclaimed as the stage of super-ego. He was no longer the man, but God's chosen vehicle for His own purpose. We see him as a humble youth, timid, fearful before the august assembly of the Parliament of Religions. "Shall I speak? What

can I say? What have I to give?" Suddenly the religious in him stirs. "Not I. Let Him speak, Whose Voice resounds throughout the universe." Then he uttered this old Sanskrit prayer:

"I seek the grace of the Blissful Lord!
By His grace even the dumb can speak, the lame can cross the mountain.
May He grant me His grace."

Vivekananda built the bridge of unity that spans the oceans which separate East and West. He was a genius who lived only to the age of thirty-nine. He left this plane of existence in 1902. From our human standpoint we say, "If only he had not worked so hard, had not spent himself so freely, had not abused his vehicle, he might still be living today." These are our human calculations. The fact is, this Man of Destiny had fulfilled his mission. What he accomplished in the nine years of his public career an ordinary person might not achieve in a hundred years of existence. It will take generations to understand and to absorb what one Vivekananda gave to the East and the West.

The Great Soul has come and gone. But the spirit he represented lives, the work he started goes on. He called to a life of renunciation and service hundreds of people in India. He banded together young men who today form a powerful organization, the Ramakrishna Mission, that works for India's uplift and betterment. Vivekananda fired the hearts of men and women who now spread education, health, hygiene, wisdom, welfare throughout the vast sub-continent of India. All this is done not as charity or philanthropy, but as service to God in man.

Were it not for Vivekananda I would not be in Amer-

ica today, serving his cause of spiritual, universal and international unity. I am happy to say that I have been the first woman of India to come to America to live and work, crossing the bridge that he built.

This ninety-first birthday anniversary of Great Swami Vivekananda is a fitting opportunity for us to reconsecrate ourselves to the seeking of the God Who dwells within us, the service of man without thought of self and the transcending of the narrow boundaries of country, creed and race, in order to realize our oneness with all humanity.

THE HUMAN OUTLOOK

By John Addington Symonds

These things shall be! A loftier race
  Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls,
  And light of knowledge in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
  To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
  On earth and fire, and sea, and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
  Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
  The pulse of one fraternity.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould
  And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song
  When all the earth is paradise . . .

UNITY

By Hari Prasad Shastri

A most undeniable fact is the unity of Consciousness in man. Man thinks, feels, wills, but though the functions differ from each other, at the base of them there is unity. The thinking faculty and the feeling are included in an all-comprehensive entity called Consciousness. Science has established the law that there is unity in variety. All the functions of electricity, to quote one example out of many, are included in electricity. The laws of nature, though seemingly different, are details of one all-comprehensive system called Nature. The forces of Nature are convertible from one to the other.

The whole universe with its seemingly conflicting phases is fundamentally one, all-comprehensive whole. Let us reflect on this fact and try to be conscious of unity in all diversity. This is a way to peace and a real understanding. One of the uses of the Yogic system is to see the One among the many. The general trend in science, philosophy, religion, ethics and our common experience is towards unity. To know is to discover unity underlying the manifesting phases of diversity. The great writers, like Shakespeare, Goethe, Aeschylus, have created thousands of characters but each has a unitive current running throughout his work.

What is this all-comprehensive Principle in which all diversities are united in harmony? In philosophy it is called Absolute, in theology, God. In the terminology of *Adhyatma Yoga,* Truth, *Sat.* The Ionian philosophers had a passion for unity. In the Absolute, Hegel includes all the details of the universe and calls it spirit. The common meeting ground of religion, theology, philosophy and science is unity.

In the holy Yoga philosophy, the universe is divided into Self and not-Self, but ultimately the not-Self is only an appearance in the One Infinite Universal Self. This ultimate Principle is not something exterior to man. It is the very Being of man himself — this is, his *Atman*. Therefore, Self is declared to be THAT, which transcends through inclusiveness subject—object relationship.

In the philosophy of Shri Ramanujacharya the sentient and the insentient are combined in one *Iswara*. His *Adwaita*, though qualified, is not duality. The universe consists of the movable and immovable but it is the seer, which creates the movable and the immovable. The *Jiva* is not different from the dream consciousness. The three states, waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, rise from one Consciousness, which is the Witness.

No man, however unreflective, will admit multiplicity in himself. In certain mental maladies, the mind is said to be split up; yet still the consciousness of the patient indicates unity and not diversity. The philosophy of *Adwaita* goes beyond duality and unity. The Absolute must transcend the relative. In the *Upanishads* the Absolute is described as the non-dual *Adwaita*. *Brahman*, the Absolute, is above unity and duality. To know is to cognise the Immutable Principle in an object. The *Upanishads* say *Brahman* is the Principle, by knowing which all is known.

The writer has noticed that love has a consciousness of unity, nay, of the Absolute. What is beyond love? Nothing. The old saying—you cannot see God and live—is true. Let me conclude with the words of the *Gita*: "As the rivers lose themselves in the ocean and become one with it, so the sage, freed from the illusion of names and forms achieves a most transcendental, divine *Purusha*."

IN WHAT WORLD DO WE LIVE?

By Sister Daya

When the question is asked: "In what world do you live?" naturally you will look around you, toward your friends, your home, the environment that is native to you, and beyond this to the world in general in all its aspects, so far as you know them, and you will reply: "There is only one world in which we live, the world of the mind, the world of the senses and the physical world with which we are all familiar."

Since all men have similar faculties and live largely on the same level of consciousness, the aspects of the outside world will seem to them to be similar. This, of course, includes the factors that we all acknowledge, the relationships, nationalities and other things that we accept as part of the machinery of material living. I think, however, that we are beginning to realize, perhaps through our increasing interest in psychology, that actually every man makes for himself the world in which he lives.

It is said that religions are as many as are the breaths of men. With equal truth it could be affirmed that the worlds in which men live are as many as their types of thinking, character and consciousness. Thus each man creates his own world, a world in which the material objects serve as theatrical props, so to speak, and create the *mise en scene*, against which the human drama goes forward. Let us take, as an example, a man born into an extremely good environment. The people around him love him and all the circumstances of his life seem propitious; yet through some strange darkness of mind, a tendency to a misinterpretation of things, and dark poisoned

thinking, he has created a Hades for himself, a world without light and without joy. This can be done. We have all seen it done. We have seen people make themselves miserable, wretched, unhappy because they were prone to attribute to their friends motives that their friends never had, and to twist the words that were spoken so as to make them mean something other than they were ever intended to mean. We have all been guilty of this at one time or another; we have all been guilty of brooding in a darkened corner of our own making, and of spoiling the good gift that is ours as children of the human race.

We are beginning to grasp the idea that we are really creative spirits for good or ill, and spin the fabric of the world we live in just as surely as a spider spins his web. Even one who claims to have no belief in anything beyond the material, is beginning to recognize that in order to solve his or another's problems, a knowledge of these inner truths is needful. In fact, when he becomes too disturbed, too involved in his own reactions and complexes, he runs to the psychologist or the psychiatrist to be straightened out. This can become a habit. We have, I think, all known people who took a certain pride in their dependence on their psychologist, and seemed never to desire to reach the point where his services would be no longer necessary.

What is to be done about all this? Are we doomed because of our human impulses, because of the strange mixture in us of good and evil, of selfishness, desire and self-sacrifice, to go again and again through dark passages and sometimes even to create a pocket of consciousness from which we find it most difficult to emerge? Sometimes, beset by many conflicts, people experience a complete loss of their mental faculties.

Sometimes they descend even unto death. Where lies the cure?

The cure, I think, must lie primarily in a right understanding of the world we live in, so far as we are able to understand it. Nowadays if one dares to dive down a little into the ocean of life, seeking the true nature of things, and comes up with the statement that this physical world after all is not the final Reality, that that Reality, though in and through all things, cannot be touched or handled or seen or grasped, people at once will say: "Oh, this is mysticism, it is too other-worldly—not practical! Let us come down and face things as they are."

Very well, we shall do just that. We shall descend to actual earth and take things at their face value. For us henceforth the stone is stone, water is water, earth is earth and ashes are ashes; and when "the long trek" is over will it not be for us "dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes?" Will not this be the result of taking things at their face value? Few, however, can do this. In all created things there are greater implications. There isn't a flower, there isn't a stone, there isn't a single object in this physical universe that does not tend to lift our minds to that which it represents, to that which it symbolizes. We find that to make life liveable we have to have some conception which dignifies the material form, which animates it and gives it meaning, purpose and significance in our lives. If we are human beings of feeling and sensibility, then woe unto us truly if we fail to stretch our conception of things beyond merely the outer aspects, because sooner or later we shall come to see how evanescent, how utterly fleeting is this outer envelope which covers the great mystery of existence. The thing we

love, the thing we want to possess, to hold in our hands, crumbles to dust even while we are holding it. When we are very young, we find it difficult to accept this. Life lies ahead of us, we say; it stretches on into the future for twenty, thirty, forty, even fifty years. Why should we worry? Yet no one can put any definite term to life and say, "I shall live till I'm eighty." We may live a year; we may live ninety years—who can know?

The length of life does not affect the reality of things. Therefore, I say, that first of all we must be ready to delve deep into the soul of things and try to understand what it tells us. We must ask and ask again: "In what truth can we place our faith? Upon what reality can we set our feet? What do we dare to look forward to as the final goal of our striving, our struggling, our dark contests with forces which sometimes seem to tear our very soul apart?" I really do believe that where a human being places his faith only in the outer material things, only in the strength of his separated ego, he is preparing for his own downfall. This little personality whom he may know as Thomas or John or Harry, this fragment of mystery whose roots he does not comprehend and has not cared to discover, what can it do against the whole universe? The person who lives in this way, holding to shadow appearances, when put under terrific pressure, sometimes actually feels as if he were about to disintegrate, as if this little separated being that he calls himself was not going to be able to hold together beneath the weight of life. At last his principles, everything, go with the wind and he finds himself groping for something stable to sustain him through the hours of his darkness.

From our own experience we must realize how needful it is to discover within, something that has a basic in-

tegrity, something that is whole, something that all the waters of the world cannot wash away, all the fires of the world cannot burn, which nothing can destroy. There is no price too great to pay for such an awareness of boundless consciousness within the being of man.

Someone has said that there is no man on earth so dangerous as the practical mystic—that is, one who has awakened in himself what has been called the mystic consciousness. But why dangerous? Because whatever he does, he does for the glory of God, with no thought for his own glory or safe-keeping. Such a man has established himself in something greater than himself which yet is himself, in the highest sense of the word. He has found that which lies beyond his little personality (beyond the name and form which at the moment he is wearing), and is invulnerable, impregnable, eternal and everlasting. To the practical mystic this higher Power is no longer a theory. It is not just words in a book. He feels it through and through him; every atom of him feels it. Living and dying are one to him. He knows that that Eternal Being of which his being is a part can never perish, and that when he sets forth to do the work that the God within him gives him to do, nothing can overwhelm him. There is no money that can buy him; he is beyond all price. He fears no death; he longs for no special kind of existence; therefore he is invulnerable; therefore some might find him dangerous.

We may wonder why it is that it is so difficult for man to attain this consciousness when he has such need of it. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that for so long he ignores its possibility. When the crisis is upon him, then it is too late to call on its strength. How wonderful it would be, you think, if you could enter into the mind of

another and know how the world appears to him. This person, for instance, is he really hard and cynical or only deeply wounded within, so that he has come to feel that every hand is turned against him? Has he ceased to look for kindness from his fellow men? In a case like this what should be your attitude? Lacking the seeing heart you grope in the dark. In such uncertainty, should you be turned back by an angry word or seek to penetrate the outer crust of anger, resentment or even hatred, in order to reach the striving, struggling soul of the man, fighting its way through gloom to the eternal Light? How deep is this person's vision? What is his idea of truth?

Right here is where you find the measure of the man. Right here is where you find your own measure. What is your idea of truth? Is it a cynical idea, concerned with the world of appearances only, with a surface unreality which comprises ugliness, unkindness and chicanery too often associated with man's outer dealings? Does this constitute truth for you? Without doubt you will answer, "No." Then let me put the question in another way: In what do you place your faith? You probably will reply: "I place my faith in a higher Power." If this be true, then why do you lie awake at night, distracted by a thousand worries? You say you trust in a greater Power, yet your mind is often darkened. When disaster threatens you sometimes you sacrifice real values for material advantage. We all are apt to do this, yet every time we give undue importance to the material, we deny the faith that we have spoken. Swami Paramananda once said that one who has real faith will never worry about anything. The great in soul, you see, make a tremendous demand on those who profess these things. If we had real faith, not just in some remote God upon whose uncertain pity we

are utterly dependent, but in that Divinity manifesting in and through our essential being, our Soul of soul, never to be touched by the shadows of the world—if we could believe in that with our whole heart, then nothing could defeat us or cause us to despair. Even when things seemed to go wrong, even in the midst of disaster, we would know that behind all this seeming misery, a clear, white and beautiful light is ever shining.

This inward Light is what a certain southern girl experienced and what she described in an article which appeared many years ago in the *Atlantic Monthly*, called *Twenty Minutes of Reality*. It was not an account of anything that she beheld. There were no visions or voices, only a sudden miraculous awareness of rhythm and beauty and bliss at the heart of things, a beholding, as it were, of an inner radiance which transformed the earthly into the heavenly.

The article drew forth from the public letters describing similar experiences which had come without warning or any apparent cause. Yet there must have been a cause—something in each individual makeup which prepared the way. One cannot believe that a cold, hard, cruel and calculating nature could suddenly be lifted up into such a blissful realization. The wonder is that simple folk without warning did enter into it and experienced, not the ultimate glory of the saints and the saviors, perhaps not the Light Itself, but the fringes of the Light. If there is in the human spirit the possibility of such an extension of consciousness, such a glimpse into the heart of eternal beauty and blessedness, then should this not be taken into account by those who appraise human possibilities? But what do we hear? Negative comments: "These people were merely imagining. Pain, sorrow, misery,

mess—these alone are real. The blissful vision is merely wishful thinking, a form of escape." But what is wrong with escape? Do we not all seek escape from darkness into light, from ignorance into wisdom, from death into life? As a reviewer once stated in the New York Times *Review of Books*, in reference to this subject: "It all depends what you are escaping from and what you are escaping to." This is the only question we have to ask ourselves. The real duties of love, the burdens of love—we do not want to escape from these. Some lines from the poem *Marpessa* by the English poet, Stephen Philips, come to my mind:

> "Yet would I not escape the doom, the place
> Whither my poets and my heroes went before me—
> Warriors that with deeds forlorn saddened
> my youth yet made it great to live.
> Since they have died their death is ever mine,
> I would not lose it."

A spirit such as this would make us ready for the deeper insight, the transforming consciousness. Great vision can grow only out of the noble, the selfless, the heroic. We build our world out of our reactions. We do not merely rub a ring and say *Abracadabra,* as does the princess in the fairy tale, in order to create paradise. Even if we could do so, the paradise would not endure. Unless we can bring fairy land into fairy land, we shall find no fairy land. Unless we can bring the heart of the queen into the palace, it will not remain a palace. The dream that we have that we shall just slip along easily into the heaven of beatitude will remain just a dream. Real things do not come that way. We are creators, though we do not know it. We are really gods, the highest gods, and are constantly creating the world in which we live—the inner world of thought and the outer world of form and action, with its happenings which we call accidental.

"If only I had money like So-and-So, I would be happy! She can go to Europe. She can have fine clothes, education, opportunities. I can have nothing. I have to work; I have to struggle. I have a sick sister to care for; and an old father who opposes me and is difficult to live with." I could go on endlessly repeating statements like these, concerning what we call our world. But our world is not these things that afflict us. Our world is what we make of these things—that is what our world is. I know how hideous outer circumstances can seem; but the soul of man is great enough to transcend them. There have been those who have transcended them. That is why the story of Christ stands so high in the annals of the human race. Every experience that He went through, no matter how painful, He transformed into a symbol of glory. In the midst of His suffering, He created a world so beautiful that men have come to see it as the Kingdom of God on earth. He did not hand over to us a ready-made kingdom, He just showed us the way to do it and how we could attain it. All the great Teachers have done the same thing.

But let us return to you of the dissatisfied heart, whoever you may be, with your rebellion and your envy. Do we dare affirm that your world of lack is not determined by the grim outer walls that shut you in, or that your more fortunate friend is living in a happy world merely because of outer circumstances? If her good fortune has made of her an inept, selfish, lethargic being, pampered and spoiled by the luxury which surrounds her, content to sink back upon what Swami Paramananda has called the "soft cushion of life," then I should say that her world was anything but beautiful or desirable. Yet you have felt that her fortune was good and yours bad. For all you

know, your seemingly unfortunate situation offers you far greater opportunities for transcendence, far less chance of spiritual deterioration than does the more easy life of your friend. Both lives are a challenge. The person of power and means who is able to rise above the deadening effects of wealth and position can create a world of genuine beauty and significance—a world of love and peace. But his struggle to overcome the caresses of life will be greater than the struggle of one who seeks to rise above life's hard blows.

Lord Buddha renounced an outer existence of grace and luxury. As Prince Siddhartha he had everything. His royal father denied him nothing. In fact his whole effort was to make the prince forget that there was anything troublesome, dark or dreadful in the world. He sought to drown him in the beauty, the pleasure and the joy of living. Yet his soul was so mighty that it refused to be drugged or poisoned. One view of a sick person, so the legend goes, the sight of a man whom death had struck down, and of one whom old age had broken, awakened in his soul an unquenchable desire to find the secret of life, even if he had to give his own life in finding it. So he went forth, leaving everything behind. What a mighty transcendence that was! What a great victory! It was his because he was an eternal being who had found eternality within himself. No doubt the seeds of transcendence had been planted through many past lives, and therefore were ready to come into full blossoming.

It is in our past lives that we plant the seeds of even our outer circumstances, of even the material world in which we find ourselves. Affluence and poverty, opportunity and its lack, beauty and ugliness, and all the hard, metallic things that hem us in, so that we beat our wings

in vain against them—all these are of our making. They have not been imposed upon us by some partial or impartial Deity, or by a cold, hard and implacable destiny. We have created them. How? Through our reactions in the past. If our reactions have been consistently selfish, aggressive or self-pitying, if we have ever placed our faith in the outer appearance rather than in the inner truth, we cannot hope merely through chance to find ourselves amid circumstances that are beneficent and bountiful.

If again and again we follow a negative line, what happens? Gradually these qualities, which have their origin in the mind and heart, and are at the start purely psychological, condense, as it were, and in later lives surround us as concrete things or as outer obstacles to the fulfillment of our desires. We meet them as sordid facts; we meet them as hatred, jealousy and anger. Our soul may rebel against them, but we ourselves have brought them into being, and we ourselves must overcome them by transcending them, by realizing that within us there is that which is beyond and above those opposing forces—heat and cold, pleasure and pain, good and evil, life and death—between which we vibrate.

The other day I was thinking of this whole picture of life and how, from the great, deep, philosphical point of view, the outer material life in itself is but a dream. If there is just one absolute inexpressible Reality in which we all have our place and in which we are ultimately lost —and found, if there is only this one Reality in the universe, how does it happen that there is this bewilderment, this losing of the way, this mistaking of the unreal for the Real; and why all this diversity in which we wander as a man wanders in a dense forest? The "why" of things

is an impossible question to answer. We can only say, things are as they are.

We are here, but our heart and mind tell us that out of the clear, uncreated Power—alone, absolute and eternal —must have flowed forth this life-stream, containing all universes within itself. Pure at first, with good and evil, heat and cold and all the opposites reconciled, it suddenly strikes an enormous boulder—the separative egotistic consciousness—standing hard and dark and stark in the middle of its course. At once the undivided river of life divides and becomes two streams instead of one. In this way the pairs of opposites are born. Thereafter on one side of the rock flows the good; on the other side, the evil. From then on, man's mind becomes divided. He forgets the former wholeness and feels that his salvation consists in following the stream of the good. Yet though this purifies his mind and prepares it for greater understanding, it does not bring a solution to the mystery which enfolds him. He continues to be caught in the conflict between good and evil which disturbs his own soul as well as the souls of others. He worships God as the Source of good and tries in devious ways to dispose of the evil. But without success. He takes his stand on a rigid morality which precipitates him into evil again through pride, cruelty and self-righteousness. He separates the sheep from the goats only to find that good and bad are relative terms and that what may appear like a goat to him may seem like a sheep to another, looking up from a lower level. Finally he is forced to acknowledge his impotence and ignorance, which may well prove the turning-point in his life. The Theosophical booklet, *Light on the Path,* sums it up in these words:

"Seek out the way . . . All steps are necessary to make

up the ladder. The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of man are steps indeed, necessary—not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone. The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will, recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful, complex, separated life exists, then indeed, and then only, he is upon the way."

In another place the author touches upon the source of evil and provides a key to that door which leads be-beyond the "pairs of opposites."

"Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal. This giant weed cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought."

So there we have it. Back of these two streams of opposites, back at the Source where ego no longer rears its ugly head, is this absolute wholeness, this pure Eternal, in which all is one. In the consciousness of this lies the redemptive power in man, the awakening power of the human spirit. As we look on that and keep on looking, we acquire an ever increasing faith and become aware of a life which is more than life, flowing through our hands, our feet, our every part, out into the surrounding One

Existence. Wherever we look, we see only expressions of that Existence, and almost imperceptibly we enter into the world of the Christ, of the Buddha. In that world all opposites are reconciled, the "enemy ceases to be an enemy," and Truth becomes the native oxygen.

He who travels thus by faith and expanding vision will find within himself such gentle, beneficent elements, such power and glory that for him the whole of life will be transformed and like the Christian saint he will cry out: "Verily this whole world is full of God!"

Think what it would mean if we could all live in such a world! The choice is ours. No one can force us. He who thinks that these thoughts are impractical is free to go out and pit his ego against the ego of others, and with his brittle, personal will, fight his way through the jungle of conflicting desires. Likewise one who yearns to penetrate the darkness of ignorance and discover Reality, has complete liberty to do so. Each in the end will create the the world in which he will live, move and have his being.

When you go to a country and see it, then it is yours. We each have to see for ourselves; teachers can only "bring the food," we must eat it to be nourished. Argument can never prove God save as a logical conclusion. It is impossible to find God outside of ourselves. Our own souls contribute all the divinity that is outside of us. We are the greatest temple. The objectivication is only a faint imitation of what we see within ourselves. Concentration of the powers of the mind is our only instrument to help us see God. If you know one soul (your own), you know all souls, past, present and to come. The will concentrates the mind. The concentrated mind is a lamp that shows us every corner of the soul.

—Swami Vivekananda

WOMEN SAINTS OF INDIA

By Dr. S. Dutt, M. A., Ph. D.

THE BRAHMA-VADINIS

"If the wealth of the whole world were mine, could it make me immortal? . . . What then shall I do with that which will not give me immortality?"

Far back in the Vedic age which saw the dawn of spiritual thought and speculation in India, a woman in India propounded these questions to her sage husband. She was Maitreyi, wife of Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya was a Vedic *Rishi.* He had acquired much wealth serving Janaka, king of the Vidahas, in the capacity of high priest. Wishing to renounce the world, he wanted to divide and deliver his wealth to his two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi. But the latter would have none of it: her heart was set not on worldly possessions, but on that ultimate divine knowledge which confers absolution from bondage to death.

Through all the after ages, this yearning for a higher knowledge and self-realization that transcended the life of home and family has come to many a woman of India.

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* which gives the story of Yajnavalka and Maitreyi (IV, 5) mentions also another woman seeker of divine knowledge, Gargi, daughter of Vachaknu, who sought enlightenment from the same *Rish* (III, 6, 8). She led Yajnavalkya from question to question till she brought him to the nature of Brahman when—because it was ineffable—she was stopped by the sage.

Maitreyi and Gargi represent a group of learned women in the Vedic age known as *Brahma-Vadinis* ("those who engaged in discussions about the divine").

BUDDHIST NUNS: AMBAPALI

In the Buddhist age which succeeded the Vedic, the same kind of spiritual aspiration moved many women to betake themselves to monastic seclusion, in order to cultivate, in the ways enjoined by the religion of the Buddha, the inner life of the spirit.

In the verses of the *Therigatha*, an anthology of verses by nuns preserved in the scriptural canon of early (*Hinayana*) Buddhism, some of the nuns of the primitive Buddhist church, express their spiritual ecstasies. They give casual flitting glimpses also of their personal life and inner experiences.

The anthology is anonymous, but there is an ancient commentary upon it in which some of the verses are ascribed to individual authoresses by name. Some of them must have been contemporaries of Lord Buddha himself: thus, one of the nuns speaks of the Lord as having "Laid his hand upon my head, taken my arm, and led me back to the garden and there given me his divine compassion." (verse XXXVI).

One of the contributors to this anthology is a well known figure in Buddhist literature, who began her life as a *hetarai* at Vesali, the capitol of the Licchavi clan, and ended as an *arhat* (saint) nun. She was Ambapali, and the scripture describes her as a woman of many-sided accomplishments and rare beauty.

She was attracted by the teachings of the Buddha and won favour in his eyes by her superior intelligence and understanding. When on his last preaching mission the Lord came to Vesali he accepted her hospitality which, it is said, scandalized the Licchavis. She made on this occasion a donation of her mansion and all her wealth to the Buddhist Order.

It is said by the ancient commentator on the *Therigatha* that it was only after the Lord's decease that she embraced nunhood, moved by a sermon, she had attended, by her son who was a monk of renown and an eloquent preacher.

In the poem in the *Therigatha,* ascribed to her, she sits contemplating like Villon's *Fair Amouress* her ageing body and its faded charms. But her "complaint" runs in a different vein and to a different mood, and leads her to realize the impermanence of all things. Having realized it, she attains to *Arhatship* (sainthood of the highest degree).

MIRA BAI: THE SAINT-POET OF MEDIAEVAL INDIA

The line of India's women-saints started in ancient India among the Vedic *Brahma-Vadinis* and the Buddhist nunhood: it continued in mediaeval India under the various forms of faith and systems of religion that grew up on the decay of Buddhism.

Most of these women-saints of mediaeval India have left no traces in biography or history: they lived in seclusion or in *ashramas,* giving their teachings to a small circle of disciples and devotees. But one of them has transcended local or parochial limits and stands out as an historic figure among India's saintly womanhood. She is Mira Bai, saint and poet, who has made the widest and most lasting appeal to the heart of India.

Her *bhajans* (devotional songs) are sung to this day all over northern India from Saurashtra to Bihar. Their basic language is *Vraja-bhasha,* a dialect spoken in and round Mathura and Vrindaban, but it is highly mixed with Gujerati, Hindi and Mowari which is a dialect of Rajasthan, so that the songs have a wide currency throughout northern and central India.

The god she cherished and sang of was *Giridhar Gopal* — that is Krishna who is mythologically supposed to have protected the cowherds of Vrindaban from flooding by monsoon rains by lifting an entire hill and holding it over their heads like an umbrella.

What is known about Mira Bai's life-history, however, is mostly a conglomeration of legends, so distorting that one of them represents Emperor Akbar and his court musician Tansen as having paid a visit to her, attracted by her reputation. But Mira certainly died before Akbar came to the throne.

She was born in a village of Rajasthan called Kukri around 1498. There is not much doubt about her parents. Her ancestors belonged to a place in Rajasthan called Mertia where her grandfather Dudhaji founded a clan, the "Mertia Rajputs". The fourth son of Dudhaji, Rao Rattan Singh, was Mira's father, a warrior who died on the battlefield. On the death of her mother also, Dudhaji took charge of the little girl and brought her up. In some of her songs, Mira says that in her husband's house she was called 'Mertaniji' (daughter of the house of the Mertias).

There is, however, considerable doubt and contradiction regarding her marriage. She came from Mertia to Udaipur after her marriage, but there is a controversy as to who her husband was. Colonel Todd in his *Annals of Rajasthan* makes her the queen of Rana Kumbh of Uadipur and it is somewhat corroborated by the presence of the magnificent temple dedicated to her, towering among the ruins of Chitore. But others like Dr. Ojha believe that she was married to Rana Sangh's son Bhoj-raj and that she became a widow sometime between 1518 and 1523.

Whatever the facts, it appears from Mira's own lyrical self-revelations in her songs that her married life was far from happy. Her ways of life — visiting temples, singing and dancing there, and mixing with common folk — incurred the intense dislike of her husband's people. She jarred upon them with her *Vaishnavite* faith (the Ranas of Udaipur were *Shaktas*) and her wholesale rejection of the Rajput code of aristocracy.

In one of her songs she declares:

"My only beloved is *Giri-dhari*—my father,
my brother, my husband.
My mother-in-law fights me;
My sister-in-law quarrels with me;
The Rana gets angry and
puts locks on my door.
He sets guards over me.
But all bonds I let loose
like flowing water,
Of family prestige and shame before men."

She suffered persecutions, and she described how she took them:

"Hanaji sent me a snake.
I wore it 'round my neck,
And lo! it became a garland.
He sent me a cup of poison;
I drank it, and it became *charanamrit**."

The legend goes that, after her husband's death, she was pressed to become a *Suttee* (it was then a widely prevalent custom in Rajasthan). But she resisted it, saying that she had a living husband—her only true husband—God *Giri-dhari.*

She was taken back to her parents' house sometime after her widowhood by her father's elder brother Vikram Deb, but Vikram's feudatory state was wrested away from him by Rao Mal Deb of Jodhpur. After this event Mira went out on a long pilgrimage, and having

*Water that has washed God's feet.

visited Mathura and Vrindaban, finally settled in Dwarka in the Kutch State. There she lived in the temple of god Ramsorji, an incarnation of Krishna, and she died mysteriously or disappeared in 1546. Legend has it that she was absorbed by god Ramsorji, body and soul, into himself and became one with him.

The *bhajans* attributed to Mira and sung all over northern India are almost innumerable, and it is difficult to pick out the authentic ones. Simple in their tune, delicious in their lilt, rapturous in their lyricism, breathing a sole-hearted human passion for the divine—Mira's songs are unsurpassed in their appeal. They are essentially feminine: athrob with a yearning for such complete self-abandonment and self-surrender as only the spirit of woman is capable of.

A PAIR OF WOMEN SAINTS OF MODERN INDIA

Several women-saints of mediaeval and modern India live only in their devotional verses and songs which have passed into the vernacular literatures of different provinces. There are no biographies or legends of them surviving.

In Hindi literature, for example, there are two outstanding names, Daya Bai and Sahajo Bai. Both were devotees of a saint named Charan Das and were sisters in faith and spirit. Charan Das (1760-1839) was himself a spiritual descendent of Kabir, as appears from a work of 600 verses ascribed to him named *Charan Das-ka Vani* (The Message of Charan Das). He lived in Delhi and the Order founded by him still survives.

Daya Bai's devotional songs, written mostly in glorification of her spiritual guide, have a distinctive poetic charm in their bare, sheer, inspired simplicity, and they

are shot through with flashes of deep spiritual insight as in the following verse:

"Like bubbles of water are our bodies;
But sleep not over this thought.
Go thou in quest of the Beloved;
Search thyself and there wilt thou discover Rama."

Sahajo Bai was filled with the same inspiration, and in style and matter, her verses can hardly be distinguished from Daya Bai's.

THE UNENDING LINE

Has this line of women saints of India which stretches so far back into her past run to its end?

Even today in parts of India, widely separated, one may discover some woman of this category locally reputed, with a band of disciples and devotees round her to whom her teachings are given. Living in retirement, such women radiate the holiness of their lives. They may belong to different faiths or different religious sects, but their teachings differ only in the formal mode of approach to the Divine. They bring into their teachings a peace, a harmony, a sweetness which is the outflow of the feminine and the motherly in them.

The women saints of India at no age have been organizers: they have founded no religious Orders. The influence of most of them has been local, and, except for those who have composed devotional songs or left sayings of profound spiritual import, their reputations have not outlasted them and passed into history. But their lives have found fulfilment in the piety and devotion of those who came under their influence and were touched, however lightly, by their spirit of holy living and holy dying.

Think glorious thoughts of God, and serve Him with a quiet mind. —*Mother Janet Stuart*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(Continued from the Winter Issue)

"Your start determines your day." This was one of the Swami's favorite sayings, and surely no start could have been brighter, fairer and more spiritually stimulating than was the seven-thirty session of the Summer School. It entailed early rising for those who had to prepare for the Service in the Shrine which followed immediately after, but in the month of August the days are still long, so that "rising with the birds" seemed no real austerity.

When all had assembled in some chosen spot out of doors, the Swami would appear, wrapped in his gold-colored *chaddar,* looking as fresh and radiant as though he had stepped right out of the heart of the sunrise. After greeting everyone with folded palms, he would slip out of his sandals and seat himself on his folded rug, in *yoga* posture, facing the household, who would then sit down on their own cushions or rugs on the grass. Then he would close his eyes and after a short meditation, he would open the *Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers* and the lesson would begin.

There was a lofty beauty, a calmness and peace emanating from the Swami's whole being (at all times, but especially when he was in meditation) that helped to raise the thoughts and still the hearts and minds of those around him. He had what might be called a "noble brow," at least so it always seemed to the disciple, and an exalted countenance, reminiscent of the more godlike traditions of the human race. But how shall these things be put into words? The memory is like a fragrance borne on the wind.

On the morning of August 7th, so the record reads,

the silence being ended, the Swami opened the book and read the daily "lesson."

"The principal work is to live the life. This we must ever bear in mind. We must do everything with peaceful and serene attitude. In talking and walking, in dealing with people, at every hour, we must carry balance in our mind. We cannot have a peaceful mind unless it is fixed at a high point. We must give it something loftier and greater to think about than the concerns of this ordinary, outer life. A man may appear meek and gentle, but if his mind is tranquil and controlled, he is tremendously powerful. Even those in high places fear him, because he has a background of something invulnerable.

(The Swami then read the prayer)

May the Eternal One, who is the resting-place of all troubled souls,
May He free me from all disturbance of mind and distress of body.
May He grant me power to carry His peace in my heart,
That it may inspire all my thoughts, words and actions.

Swami: It isn't merely by the spirit of resolution and self-help that we can attain this state of inward serenity. In all our efforts we must seek the Divine, for all efforts are fruitless unless we have divine aid. In order to know peace we must give peace and we must always keep our hearts humble and full of faith. Doubt is darkness, it is absence of spiritual light. The mind may be peaceful, like a clear sky, yet one little doubting element will overcloud it. It is better to have faith than doubt. Suppose the people you trust fail you, even then continue to trust them.

You all know and often repeat the *Litany to the Divine Mother*. It shows that in our mind and in our

heart, through hunger and thirst, in the feelings of faith, peace, forgiveness, in all tendencies, through beauty, through shadow, even in our mistakes, it is the Divine Mother that is manifesting. There cannot be anything that moves save through Her power and Her presence. There can be no shadow without something that causes the shadow. Thus everything is related to that great Cosmic Spirit. "Thee I love in all, and all I love for Thee." See the beauty of it! In all things to find that Spirit and feel Its impetus!

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of forgiveness, we bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

Forgiveness is a very great attribute.

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of peace . . .

A powerful attribute!

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of beauty . . . .

She is the Maker of the beautiful.

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of all tendencies . . .

What tendencies can arise without that great Principle?

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of kindness . . .

A great divine attribute!

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of contentment . . . .

Also a divine attribute. Possessing it, sorrow ceases to be sorrow. The devotee exclaims: "Thou dost come to me in the form of sorrow!" Discipline, ordeals, the harsh aspects of life are good. If they become too burdensome

we can always pray: "O, Mother, show Thyself under another aspect." That is legitimate. Children can always do that.

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of mother . . .

Here the Mother lifts Her veil a little and reveals Her face.

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of mistakes, we bow down to that Mother again and again and again.

Do you not see? It is like pouring an oblation. We do make mistakes, but if we can only lay down pain and pleasure, happiness and misery at Her feet, all will be redeemed. There is no other way.

He who takes shelter at Thy feet never meets with any danger, but becomes the shelter for other souls.

All these liturgies and supplications may seem at first to be of purely local origin and color. This litany to the Divine Mother, for instance, so typical of Hindu thought and feeling, might appear to a person of biased mind as something to which he could not subscribe. But when we find the essence, its beauty is of universal significance and appeal.

At all hours there should be this element of consecration. All tasks and all activities, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, are related to the One Source. There is nothing that does not come forth from that Source. Just think, here we are surrounded by the beautiful, yet sometimes we go around complaining.

Be like little children. The body may age and world may try to fill us with its consciousness; but do not let the greater consciousness be crowded out. Then there will never be any more danger or difficulty for you.

Monday, August 9th, 7:30 A.M.

Swami: Boundless! Boundless! Thou art boundless! Thou art the beginning. Thou art our goal. Thou art the Ancient One. The whole universe is permeated and pervaded by Thee. Thou art boundless—boundless!

(Swami reads from *Daily Thoughts and Prayers*)

He attains who always remains the witness and never loses his tranquillity.

Swami: One who has spiritual vision always is the witness. He looks upon all things unconcerned. Not that he is indifferent; he sees beyond. In the *Upanishads* we are given the picture of two birds sitting on the same tree. One is silent, serene, majestic. The other is restless, discontented, hopping from fruit to fruit and not satisfied with anything. Suddenly it looks up and beholds its lofty companion and immediately all its grief and discontent vanish as it feels itself at one with the spirit of the greater bird. This gives a picture of the higher and the lower self of man. When divided there is restlessness and lack of peace in man's heart; but when they become one, infinite peace descends upon the soul.

Chemicals when they mix properly are beneficial. If not, they bring explosion. Same way it is with our life when we contact the world. When we identify ourselves with it, we destroy our own happiness and our peace. The way of the witness is different: he sees all things but is not contaminated.

(Swami reads poem)

It (my vina) is renewed and refreshed;
It is revived by the touch of Thy Hand.
The touch of Thy Hand is ever fresh life.
Heart of my vina, its voice and music art Thou;
Verily Thou art the soul of my song.

Swami: If we could only realize wherefrom our strength comes, could just remember that all things come from the One Source. The individual soul, when it is cut off from the great, beneficent Spirit cannot help but be afflicted.

(Swami reads lesson)

When you lose yourself, you gain poise, tranquillity and steadiness. When outer happiness comes, you must not be too elated. You must stand as a witness on guard that you do not forget and let yourself be carried away by the temptations and distractions of the material world. There is a higher state of calmness and security that no amount of calculation and planning can give you. It comes through connection with the Source of all peace.

Swami: There are many people who have spiritual impetus and who seem to make progress, but they lack steadiness; therefore they fall back again and again. Steadiness is the greatest possible asset in the spiritual life. Every day that we have steadiness we have gain. Our effort should be when we speak, to be steady; when we walk, to be steady; in all things, to be steady. In the light of wisdom even our moments of mishap are blessed moments, for those moments teach us to be steady and unaffected in success and failure, victory and defeat, praise or blame.

Hari Om! Hari Om! Tat Sat Om! Hari is the Lord. When He attracts the heart it cannot resist. *Tat Sat Om!* That is the greatest *mantram* we can ever repeat. If you can live just one particle of that which you receive every day, just one little fraction of it, you will be blessed and others will be blessed through you. It takes courage to live the spiritual life. This means moral courage. No weak person can attain.

Tuesday, August, 10th, 7:30 A.M.

(Swami reads from *Daily Thoughts and Prayers*)

We should be thankful for every ordeal, every misfortune. They lay the foundation for serenity and cheerfulness of mind.

Swami: It was said of the mother of Arjuna that her constant prayer was that she might always have miseries, so that she might never forget the Lord. It is a fact in human nature that when we have troubles and ordeals, we do not forget Him. There are some souls who never forget.

"O Mother, everything is Thy will. No thing is performed without Thy will.
People think they are doing, but it is really Thou who doest all things."

Christ realized this, and all great Souls. There is no difference between the spiritually exalted. Surrender to the Divine Will is what makes them exalted.

"Thou canst capture an elephant in a little mud puddle
And Thou canst make a lame man to cross the mountains.
We speak as Thou makest us to speak!"

This consciousness is the only thing. When you possess it, it doesn't make any difference what happens in the outer world. People may seek to distract you and disturb you, but, like the compass, you ever remain fixed at the point of your Ideal.

(Swami reads lesson)

Serenity is a very desirable quality. It is like a tonic to body and heart. It brings great strength. We all need it. When we lose our serenity, we do what is disturbing to ourselves and to others. Now we depend too much upon our own thought and calculation. When we learn to de-

pend upon God, then we grow quiet and know true serenity.

Swami: We can do this. We can raise our hand with the idea, I am doing it, or with the consciousness that there is a greater Power behind that is doing it.

(Swami reads Prayer)

O Supreme One, help me to follow Thy way of wisdom,
And learn to maintain evenness in all the uneven circumstances of my daily life.
May I be undaunted in my search for Thee.
And may I trust wholly to Thy guiding Hand at every step.

Swami: There are many intellectual people who think they are going to map out success; but they cannot do it. Ego always defeats us, but we do not know this. "May I trust wholly to Thy guiding Hand . . ." That is the idea of surrender. It is easy to say "Thy Will be done!" when things go according to our will and our desires; but to say it from our heart when everything goes unevenly in our outer life—that is the way of surrender. That is the strength of meditation. That is the strength of prayer. That is the strength of holy life; and that strength can be ours when we fasten our heart, our mind, our soul upon that One who alone can sustain us in the world of life.

NOON

Swami: The lesson this morning was to be thankful for every ordeal. But to accept every ordeal, not with a morbid sense but with a real sense of gratitude, requires divine aid. How often when we have good fortune we are blinded by our self-will and then the real power is cut off. There are moments when we are in rhythm with our-

selves and everybody else. That is only possible when we have the help of the Divine. Resolution is a mighty thing, but at the same time we must have that Higher Power in order to attain.

Prayer always rises from the child instinct. How often the Old Masters portrayed prayer through the figure of a little child. The man of the world knows too much. Why should he surrender? Why should he put himself into the hands of another? But the child is so helpless. He knows there is a father and a mother to protect him and he gives himself with complete trust to them.

Surrender and peace of mind can come only in one way: when we know our connection with the divine consciousness and learn to take our place there. Not anything in this world, not a father, not a mother, not a friend—nothing can compare with what we receive from the Spirit, once we learn to look upon life with wisdom. The power of the soul transcends all limitations. The weakling falls under the sway of ego. Power comes from only one Source and the more we learn to ally ourselves with that Source, the more will be our efficiency, our poise and our peace.

"May I always be led!" Merely saying that with negative aspect might deprive us of our strength; but also our strength lies in the heartfelt prayer: "In all things may Thy Will be done!" Our mind is like a lamp. We never need to remain in the dark.

May the wind of His blessing blow away all our heaviness, all our selfishness, all our inperfections, giving us fresh inspiration. May we ever be guided by His compassionate hand in all our thoughts, in all our words, in all our actions.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE — ANANDA ASHRAMA
COHASSET, MASSACHUSETTS

Winter passes swiftly in Cohasset where the faithful band of workers carry on their service to Vedanta. The warmth of the new home and the constant response to the ever-changing beauty of the surrounding out-of-doors minimizes the rigor of New England's cold weather. Each week trips are made to Boston on Sundays and Thursdays when Services are held regularly.

The chief events of the season are the birthday observances of India's modern saints. First in order has been Holy Mother, wife and disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, the centenary of whose birth is being celebrated throughout India and abroad this year. On Sunday, December the 27th, together with an all day worship in the Community Shrine of Cohasset, its spirit was carried to Boston where Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke on the life of Holy Mother during the public Service. The plan is to commemorate the Centenary on a larger scale during the summer.

On Swami Vivekananda's birthday, January the 31st, Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, minister of Boston's Arlington Street Church, Unitarian in denomination, shared honors with Gayatri Devi in paying tribute to the illustrious Swamiji. The meeting was held in the main auditorium of the city's beautiful, historic Universalist Meeting House at 70 Charles St., the present address of the Vedanta Centre's weekly activities. Rev. Greeley's address appears in this issue of the *Message of the East*.

Swami Paramananda's birthday observance was held on Sunday, February the 14th. Gayatri Devi's subject at this Service was "O Man of God." The celebration in-

cluded music and refreshments. By the time this reaches the reader Sri Ramakrishna's natal day will have been observed on March 7th.

OUTSIDE LECTURES

During January Srimati Gayatri Devi gave a course of three lectures on "Message of Hinduism" before the Adult Study group of the Arlington Street Church.

On Thursday the 29th an Indian Afternoon program was sponsored by the Vedanta Centre for the International Institute of Boston. It consisted of Hindu music rendered by Srimati vocally, as well as recorded songs, an address by her on "India Old and New" and tea and refreshments of Indian ingredients and style. In spite of a snow storm one hundred and twenty persons attended the function.

A discussion group within the Congregational Church of Melrose, Massachusetts invited Gayatri Devi to address them and answer questions on Hindu Religion and philosophy on Sunday, February the 14th. Again on the following week she was the guest speaker on a similar subject before a young people's society of the First Parish Unitarian Church in Scituate, the neighboring town to Cohasset.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

Christmas was celebrated at the California Retreat in the usual manner. Sister Daya, who had returned from the east on the nineteenth of December, conducted the lovely Christmas Eve Service on the afternoon of the twenty-fourth. The spirit of the Holy Birth pervaded the community during the Holidays. The Sunday following Christmas marked the centenary of the birth of Sri Saradamani Devi, the Holy Mother. The Services were dedicated to her humble and sanctified life, as well as to

the Virgin Mary, "Mother of God." In both sermons Sister Daya made living and vibrant the concept of God as Mother.

The Watch Service, held at eleven-thirty on New Year's Eve, was an unusually beautiful one. All present were renewed by Sister Daya's inspiring Service, and felt that it was truly "right" to spend the first moments of the New Year in the holy atmosphere created by prayerful hearts and accentuated by flowers, lights and music. Besides Sister Vimala's offering of organ works, the musical program included Carl Damkilde, tenor, and Miss Margaret Aue, cellist. Miss Aue is a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and spent some weeks at the Ashrama's Guest House.

On Friday, the twenty-ninth of January, Amiya Chakravarty, Professor of Comparative Oriental Religions and Literature—then lecturing in Southern California—paid a visit to Ananda Ashrama. Although Prof. Chakravarty's time was limited, he spent several restful hours at the Ashrama. The following is from a letter received from him after his return to Boston University:

"As I look back upon my recent wanderings, my pilgrimage to Ananda Ashrama stands bright and clear in my mind and I feel grateful beyond words for the gracious hours that I was privileged to spend in your midst. The atmosphere of spiritual work and devotion, the good fellowship, the music and the Indian dinner, as well as the noble beauty of the surroundings made the experience a complete and enduring part of one's life. My friend, the Catholic scholar and worker for peace, Dr. Gabriele Marie Muncker, felt the same inspiration and joy and expressed her deep thankfulness . . . Please convey my heart-felt greetings to all members of the Ashrama."

On the thirty-first of January a joint celebration marked the birthdays of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Paramananda. The morning Service was dedicated to Great Swamiji and his life's message. Sister Daya's subject was "Vivekananda's Vision." Luncheon was served at the Community House to about thirty guests. The afternoon talk was devoted to Ashrama's beloved founder, Swami Paramananda, and the spirit of his work. Sister Daya made both of these transcendent personalities real and living for her listeners, and brought forth the essence of their teachings. It was a day of true inspiration to higher idealism.

On Sunday, March seventh, the most sacred birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was observed with the profound feeling that this day must ever evoke in those whose hearts respond to the call of the Universal Spirit. It was a day of homage.

NEW RADIO BROADCAST

On Saturday, January ninth, Gayatri Devi was heard, by transcription, in the first of a series of radio broadcasts dedicated to and presented by the California Ashrama. The station is a local one (KALI—Pasadena). The initial broadcast presented the ancient background of the Vedanta philosophy. Succeeding ones—given by Sister Daya and the Ashrama's devoted friend, Olive Conway—have constituted a series of very apt and stimulating questions and answers concerning the great precepts and principles of the Vedanta. Carl Damkilde sings the theme, "Holy Sanctuary," by Swami Paramananda while Sister Vimala accompanies him and provides the organ interludes. Records of individual programs may be obtained through the Ashrama at a cost of four dollars each. At a later date the entire series will appear in pamphlet form.